

After Mexican truckers launch national strike, trucking associations end stoppage through “dialogue tables” with government

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29 October 2026

Truck drivers and small transport operators blocked or slowed traffic at dozens of points across Mexico on Monday and Tuesday, October 26 and 27, in a national stoppage against the robberies, extortion and killings that have made the country's highways a deadly workplace.

On Monday morning, the Interior Ministry (Segob) counted 38 protest points in 19 states. Drivers closed the highway at Tlaxco, Tlaxcala, and kilometer 17 outside Nuevo Laredo, the main crossing for freight into the United States. In Veracruz, drivers shut the highway to Cardel and blocked access to the port.

By Tuesday, Segob announced that the National Chamber of Freight Transport (Cámara Nacional del Autotransporte de Carga, CANACAR) and its allies had committed to “permanently withdraw the blockades and suspend the demonstrations” in exchange for four “working tables” with federal agencies. *La Jornada* reported that the roads were cleared after 34 hours.

The minutes commit the organizations to “avoid new disruptions to the public and to free transit.” There is no indication that the drivers were consulted.

The stoppage showed the social power of the workers who move 2.6 million tonnes of freight daily on Mexico's roads. But it was rapidly called off, by an employers' chamber that used the drivers' grievances as leverage for a tax concession. The Morena government of President Claudia Sheinbaum defused the struggle, as it has for two years, with talks and promises.

The immediate spark came in Puebla, where on the night of October 21 gunmen killed Estanislao Hernández Lozano, a delegate of the Mexican Alliance of Transport Organizations (AMOTAC), and took his pickup. “In one month, 18 cargo trucks have been assaulted,” said AMOTAC's Puebla representative, Andy Rossini Martínez. State prosecutors recorded 882 robberies of transport workers in Puebla from January to September, 832 of them violent.

In Tehuacán, HAMOTAC coordinator Juan Carlos Romero told Municipios Puebla that criminals demand up to 200,000 pesos (\$10,600 USD) to return stolen trucks.

Drivers identify the authorities as part of the problem. In

August, truckers from Lázaro Cárdenas protested at the Morelia offices of the Attorney General (Fiscalía General de la República, FGR) against checkpoint extortion and towing charges of up to 120,000 pesos. One trucker, Andrés, wrote on Facebook during the stoppage: “I am a trucker and proud of it, and all we demand is a stop to the insecurity on the highways, and to the extortion and robberies by the rats in uniform and badge.”

The violence on the highways nor any of the other issues faced by truckers will be ended by a capitalist state whose own police and prosecutors are entangled with the criminal networks, and which defends the social order that breeds them.

In early September, more than 300 drivers, organized without CANACAR or any other chamber, blocked the Mexicali-Calexico crossing for four days against Washington's revocation of the visas of some 20,000 Mexican drivers. Sheinbaum declared that withdrawing a visa is “a sovereign decision of a State” and that “we cannot intervene,” and the blockade was wound up in a single meeting between officials, business groups and a handful of drivers' “representatives.”

On October 1, hundreds and perhaps thousands of owner-operators across the United States parked their rigs against diesel prices driven up by the US war on Iran, in a protest organized on social media.

The Mexican drivers are part of an international upsurge of the working class against the consequences of war, inflation and austerity.

Some truckers have recognized this. “Join the march that the compañeros, the social security workers, are organizing for tomorrow,” one trucker urged a group on Facebook, referring to workers at the Social Security Institute (IMSS) who have rebelled against a wage deal imposed by their union and the government, and called a national march for October 30.

CANACAR is not a workers' organization. Under Mexican law, business chambers are “organs of consultation and collaboration of the State.” It represents trucking firms from small companies to large fleets, and led a coalition with HAMOTAC, FEMATRA and INDECO.

Its platform includes a demand for new taxes alongside

highway security. The 2027 revenue law lowers the annual-revenue ceiling from 300 million to 250 million pesos for firms that can credit up to half their toll spending against income tax. Its president, Augusto Ramos Melo, told Sheinbaum before the stoppage: “We support Plan México... We are your allies.”

The Finance Ministry table will discuss tax incentives and financing to replace trucks. The IMSS and the Labor Ministry will discuss “mechanisms to incorporate operators into the social security regime,” an admission that many drivers have no insurance or formal social benefits, and “the particularities of trucking in the face of the reduction of the working week.”

Sheinbaum treated the stoppage as a tax revolt by “a very small sector,” saying the change affects 170 of 2,580 beneficiary firms. “What there cannot be is a defense of privileges,” she said on October 27, asking why the truckers “had to stop yesterday and close the roads if there was dialogue.”

She said nothing about the drivers killed and disappeared.

In November 2025, a four-day blockade by truckers and farmers ended with Segob promising a special prosecutor's office for highway crimes and surveillance cameras. In August, ANTAC said the promises had been kept only “drop by drop,” and reported 20 drivers disappeared in January alone. Under the Segob communiqué, a commenter called them “pure *atole con el dedo*,” the Mexican expression for empty promises meant to keep people quiet.

Those not satisfied by those promises have been subjected to state violence. On April 7, authorities tear-gassed a blockade of truckers and farmers on the Arco Norte highway in Tlaxcala.

The security table will be held with the FGR, the National Guard and the Security Ministry headed by Omar García Harfuch, the forces drivers accuse of extortion. On October 6, CANACAR itself credited a fall in robberies to the removal of “local officials or elements colluding with criminal gangs.”

Genaro García Luna, who ran federal security under President Felipe Calderón, is serving a US prison sentence for taking bribes from the Sinaloa cartel. García Harfuch rose through the Federal Police in those years under García Luna's top deputy, Luis Cárdenas Palomino, and his name appears in the government's own report on the disappearance of the 43 Ayotzinapa teaching students in 2014, which he denies.

The issue, however, is not a few corrupt officials but the class character of the state. Its police, prosecutors and soldiers defend capitalist property and a social order that produces crime on a mass scale. According to the statistics institute INEGI, 54.3 percent of Mexico's workforce, 32.6 million people, worked informally in September, without contracts, health care or pensions.

A bill presented in the Senate in August would cap drivers' shifts at 14 hours a day, a measure of the hours they work now. Morena's program, built on partnership with business through Plan México, defends the inequality from which organized crime draws its recruits.

Drivers' demands on safety, health care, hours and pay find no outlet through these channels. The tables bring government ministries together with associations dominated by the larger fleet owners, whose priorities are tax credits, truck subsidies and flexibility on hours. Drivers' conditions will be bargained over by the very forces responsible for them.

What is needed

A decisive question is who controls the struggle. Drivers need rank-and-file committees, independent of the business chambers, the unions and Morena, that mobilize their independent power.

They must also oppose any attempt to use “security” as a pretext for building up the police, the National Guard and the military. These forces belong to a capitalist state whose purpose is to defend the property and profits of the ruling class. It has used them to clear blockades with tear gas and jail drivers, while their own officers extort truckers at checkpoints. Every new power handed to them in the name of fighting crime will be turned against workers who strike, block roads or protest.

These committees must also organize the defense of drivers, sharing information on routes and threats and mobilizing other workers whenever a driver is attacked, disappeared or jailed. They should link up with IMSS, auto and port workers, and with drivers in the United States, through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

Ending the violence on Mexico's highways requires ending the poverty, informality and inequality on which organized crime feeds. That means a struggle against the capitalist system itself, organized internationally on a socialist program.



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